27th April 1960]

[*Note.*—An asterisk * at the commencement of a speech indicates revision by the member.

SRI V. K. RAMASWAMY MUDALIYAR: Sir, I want to bring to your notice that some ten days back, I gave notice of a matter under rule 41. It has not been taken up so far and I would like to know what happened to it.

MR. SPEAKER: I have no idea. I will find out.

II.—INFORMATION *RE*: STRENGTH OF THE MAIN OPPOSITION PARTY.

SRI N. K. PALANISAMI: Sir, on a point of information. You were pleased to inform us the other day that you have received intimation from two Members of the Indian National Democratic Congress Legislature Party that they have resigned from that party and so they might be allotted separate seats in the House. I want to know whether separate seats have been allotted to them. Secondly, I want to know whether separate seats will be reserved for other members of the party if and when they are compelled to resign from the party and seek separate seats. Thirdly, I want to know the position of the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member seems to be very very persistently curious about this matter. I may, however, tell the House that in India's Constitution, no mention is made of the Leader of the Opposition as a constitutional necessity or as an Officer of the House. But under the parliamentary system, the Speaker is the ultimate authority to recognise and decide upon, in the case of a number of parties in the Opposition as to which party should be recognized as the Official Opposition Party. In the House of Commons, the recognition of an Official Opposition Party involves three factors: one, that it is an organized party both inside and outside the House, secondly, that it is numerically the largest minority party and thirdly, that it is the heir-apparent of the administration in the sense that it can form an alternative Government. In our Assembly, we have decided or rather considered it desirable that for a party to be recognized as the main Opposition party, it should have a strength of 21 members which is the number fixed for the quorum of the House. I had therefore recognized the Indian National Democratic Congress Legislature Party which had a strength of 21—I think 22—as the main opposition, and its leader Sri V. K. Ramaswamy Mudaliyar as the Leader of the Opposition. Now that two members have resigned from that party, that party will hereafter be only an Opposition Group and Sri V. K. Ramaswamy Mudaliyar instead of being the Leader of the Opposition, will only be the Leader of that group. In view of the numerical strength of that party, so far as I am now aware of, I am still recognizing that party as the first Opposition Party in this House.

As regards the question whether I am going to reserve seats in the House for others who may resign later, I should say that it is hypothetical question when that contingency arises, I shall consider the question. I hope I have satisfied the curiosity of the hon. Member.

III.—CALLING ATTENTION TO FAILURE OF MONSOON IN TIRUPATHUR TALUK.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Member, Sri N. V. Chockalingam, will now call the attention of the Hon. the Minister for Revenue to a matter of urgent public importance, viz., failure of monsoon in Tirupathur taluk, Ramanathapuram district, resulting in wholesale failure of crops in that taluk.